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YAWCOB STRAUSS.

BY CHARLES P. ADAMS.



I haf you funny leedle poy, Not gomes schust to mine knee; Der queerest schap, der createst rogue As efer you dit see ; He runs, und schumps, und schmashes dings In all barts of der house-But vot off dot? he vas mine son,



He get der measles und der mumbs. Und eferyding dot's oudt; He spills mine glass of larger bier, inum indo mine kraut; He fills mine pipe mit Limburg cheese-Dot vas der roughest chouse: I'd dake det vrom no oder poy But leedle Yawcob Strauss.



He dakes der milk ban for a dhrum, Und cuts mine cane in dwo, To make der schticks to beat it mit-Mine cracious, dot vas drue ! I dicks mine bed vas schplit abart, He kicks oup sooch a touse But nefer mind, der poys vas few Like dot young Yawcob Strauss.



He asks me questions snoch as dose; Vrom der hair upon mine hed !

Who vas it cuts dot schmoodth blace oudt Und where der plaze goes vrom der lamp Vene'er der glim I douse-How gan I all dose dings eggsblain To dot schmall Yawcob Strauss.

a-a prisoner on trial. Do you observe any thing peculiar in her face or man-

"I observed a very peculiar manner in all those about her-an effort at cordiality in which they did not succeed; a certain constraint in look and fone while speaking to her. I even saw it in yourself just now as you mentioned her name."

"You did? I'm sorry for that-exceedingly sorry!" anxiously. "I believe in Louisa Waring's innocence as I do in that of my own child; and if I thought she was hurt or neglected in But there's a cloud on this housethe girl, Floyd-that's a fact. It don't amount even to suspicion. If it did, one could argue it down. Butwhat do you make of her-her face now ?"

" It is not an especially clever face, nor one that indicates power of any kind; not the face of a woman who of her own will would be the heroine of any remarkable story. I should judge her to have been a few years ago one of the sensible, light hearted, sweet tempered girls of whom there are so many in Virginia; a nice housekeeper, and one who would have made a tender wife and mother."

"Well, well? Nothing more?" "Yes. She has not matured into womanhood as such girls do. She looks as if her growth in every day experience had stopped years ago; that while her body grew older her mind had halted, immature, incomplete. A grief might have had that effect, or the absorption of all her faculties by one sudden mastering idea."

"You are a little too metaphysical for me," said Beardsley. "Poor Lou isn't shrewd by any means, and always gives me the feeling that she needs care and protection more than most women, if that is what you mean."

"There is a singular expression in her face at times," I resumed.

"Ah! Now you have it," he muttered.

"Sitting there in your parlor, where there is certainly nothing to dread, she has glanced behind and about her again and again and again, as though she heard a sound that frightened her. I observe, too, that when any man speaks to her, she fixes on him a keen, suspicious look. She does not have it with women. It passes quickly, but it is there. It is precisely the expression of an insan person, or a guilty one dreading arrest."

"You are a close observer, Floyd. I told my wife that we could not do better than submit the whole case to your judgment. We are all Lou's friends in the neighborhood; but we cannot look at the matter with your legal experience and unprejudiced eyes. Come, let us go in to supper now."

The next morning I was summoned to Beardsley's "study," (so called probably from the total absence of either book or newspaper,) and found himself and his wife awaiting me, and also a Doctor Scheffer, whom I had previously noticed among the guests-a gaunt, heetic young man, apparently on the high road to death, the victim of an incurable consumption.

"I asked William Scheffer to meet us here," said Mr. Beardsley, "as Louisa Waring was an inmate of his father's house at the time of the occurrence. She and William were playmates together. I believe I am right, William. You knew all the circumstances of that terrible night ?"

The young man's heavy face changed painfully, "Yes; as much as was known to any one but Louisa, and-the guilty man, whoever he was. But why are you dragging out that wretched affair ?" turning angrily on Mrs. Beardsley. "Surely, any friend of Miss Waring's would try to bury the past for

"No," said the lady calmly. "It has been buried quite too long, in my opinion; for she has carried her burden for six years. It is time now that we should try to lift it for her. You are sitting in a draught, William. Sit on this sofa."

Scheffer, coughing frightfully and complaining with all the testiness of a long humored invalid, was disposed of at last. Beardsley began:

"The story is briefly this. Louisa, before her father's death, was engaged to be married to Colonel Paul Merrick (Merricks of Clarke county, you know.)

The wedding was postponed for a year when General Waring died, and Louisa went to her uncle's-your father, William-to live during that time. When the year was over, every preparation was made for the marriage; invitations were sent to all the kinsfolk on both sides (and that included three or four counties on a rough guess,) and we-the immediate family-were assembled at Major Scheffer's preparing for the grand event, when—" Beardsley became now excessively hot and flurried, and getting up, thumped heavily up and down the room.

"After all, there is nothing to tell. Why should we bring in a famous lawyer to sit in judgment on her as if the girl were a criminal? She only did, Floyd, what women have done since the beginning-changed her mind without reason. Paul Merrick was as clever and lovable a young fellow as you would find in the State, and Louisa was faithful to him-she's faithful to him yet; but on the night before the wedding she refused to marry him, and has persisted in the refusal ever since, without assigning a cause."

"Is that all of the story?" I asked. Reardsley was silent.

"No," said his wife gently; "that is not all. I thought McCormack's courage would fail before he gave you the facts. I shall try to tell you-

"Only the facts, if you please, without any inference or opinions of others."

The old lady paused for a moment, and then began:

" A couple of days before the wedding we went over to Major Scheffer's to help prepare for it. You know we have no restauranteurs nor confectioners, to depend upon, and such occasions are busy seasons. The gentlemen played whist, rode about the plantation, or tried the Major's wines, while indoors we, all of us-married ladies and girls, and a dozen old aunties-were at work with cakes, creams and pastry. I recollect I took over our cook, Prue, because Lou fancied nobody could make such wine jelly as hers. Then Lou's trousseau was a very rich one, and she wanted to try on all of her pretty dresses that we might see

"My dear," interrupted Mr. Beardsley, "this really appears irrelevant to the matter-

"Not at all. I wish Mr. Floyd to gain idea of Louisa's temper and mood at that time. The truth is she was passionately fond of her lover, and very happy that her marriage was so near; and being a modest little thing, she hid her feeling under an incessant, merry chatter about dresses and jellies. Don't you agree with me, William ?"

The sick man turned on the sofa with a laugh, which looked ghastly enough on his haggard face. "I submit, Aunt Sophie, that it is hardly fair to call me in as witness in this case. I waited on Lou for two or three years, Mr. Floyd and she threw me over for Merrick. It is not likely that I was an unprejudiced observer of her moods just then.1

"Nonsense, William. I knew that was but the idlest flirtation between you, or I should not have brought you here now," said his aunt. "Well, Mr. Floyd, the preparations were all completed on the afternoon before the wedding. Some of the young people had gathered in the library-Paul Merrick and his sisters and-you was there, William ?"

"Yes, I was there."

"And they persuaded Lou to put on her dress and vell to give us a glimpse of the bride. I think it was Paul who wished it. He was a hot, eager young fellow, and he was anxious to taste his happiness by anticipation. It was a dull, gusty afternoon in October. I remember the contrast she made to the gray, cold day, as she came in shy and blushing, and her eyes sparkling, in her haze of white, and stood in front of the window. She was so lovely and pure that we were all silent. It seemed as if she belonged then to her lover alone, and none of us had a right to utter a word. He went up to her, but no one heard what he said, and then took her by the hand and led her reverently to the door. Fresently I met her coming out of her chamber in a cloak. Her maid Abby was inside, folding the white dress and vell. 'I am going down to Aunt Huldahs,' Lou said to me. 'I promised her to come again before I was married and | money, was found empty a few feet

tell her the arrangements all over once more." Huldah was an old colored woman, Lou's nurse, who lived down on the creek bank and had long been bedridden. I remember that I said to Louisa that her walk would be long and lonely, and told her to call Paul to accompany her. She hesitated a moment, and then turned to the door, saying Huldah would probably be in one of her funereal moods, and that she would not have Paul troubled on the eve of his wedding day. She started, running and looking back with a laugh, down the hill." Mrs. Beardsley faltered and stopped.

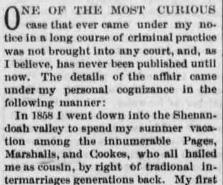
"Go on," said Dr. Scheffer. "The incidents which follow are all that really affect Louisa's guilt or innocence."

"Go on, mother," said Beardsley hastily. "Louisa's innocence is not called in question. Remember that. Tell everything you know without scruple."

The old lady began again in a lower voice: "We expected an arrival that afternoon-Houston Simms, a distant kinsman of Major Scheffer's. He was from Kentucky-a large owner of blooded stock-and was on his way home from New York, where his horses had just won the prizes at the fall races. He had promised to stop for the wedding, and the carriage had been sent to the station to meet him. The station as you know, is five miles up the road. By some mistake the carriage was late, and Houston started, with his valise in his hand. to walk to the house, making a short cut through the woods. When the carriage came back empty, and the driver told this to us, some of the young men started down to meet the old gentleman. It was then about four o'clock, and growing dark rapidly. The wind, I recollect, blew sharply, and a cold rain set in. I went out on the long porch, and walked up and down, feeling uneasy and annoyed at Louisa's prolonged absense. Colonel Merrick, who had been looking for her all through the house, had just learned from me where she had gone, and was starting with umbrellas to meet her, when she came suddenly up to us, crossing the ploughed field, not from the direction of Huldah's cabin but from the road. We both hurrled toward her; but when she caught sight of Colonel Merrick she stopped short, putting out her hands with a look of terror and misery quite indescribable. Take me away from him! Oh, for suffered some great shock, and taking her in my arms, led her in, motioning him to keep back. She was so weak as to fall, but did not faint, nor lose consciousness for a single moment. All night she lay, her eyes wandering from side to side, as in momentary expectancy of the appearance of some one. No anodyne had any effect on her-every nerve seemed strained to its utmost tension. But she did not speak a word except at the sound of Colonel Merrick's voice or step, when she would beg piteously that he should be kept away from her. Toward morning she fell into a kind of stupor, and when she awoke appeared to be calmer. She beckoned to me, and asked that her uncle Scheffer and Judge Grove, her other guardian, should be sent for. She received them standing, apparently quite grave and composed. She asked that several other persons should be called in, desiring, as she said, to have as many witnesses as possible to what she was about to make known. You all know,' said she, ' that this was to have been my wedding day. I wish you now to bear witness that I refuse today or at any future time to marry Paul Merrick, and that no argument or persuasion will induce me to do so. And I wish,' raising her hand to keep silence-I wish to say publicly that it is no fault or ill doing of Colonel Merrick's that has driven me to this resolve. I say this as in the sight of Almighty God.' Nobody argued, or scarcely, iudeed, spoke to her. Every one saw that she was physically a very ill woman; and it was commonly believed that she had received some audden shock which had unhinged her mind. An hour afterward the searching party came in (for the young men, not finding Houston Simms had gone out again to search for him.) They had found his dead body concealed in the woods by Mill's spring. You know the place. There was a pistol shot

through the head, and a leathern pocket-

book, which had apparently contained



A WOMAN'S VOW.

A LAWYER'S STORY.

I somedimes dink I schall go vild

Und beaceful dimes enshoy,

I prays der Lord, "dake anydings"

But leaf dot Yawcob Strauss.

But ven he vas ashleep in ped,

So guiet as a mouse,

Und vish vonce more I gould hat rest

Mit sooch a grazy poy,

termarriages generations back. My first visit was to the house of McCormack Beardsley, a kinsman and school-fellow whom I had not seen since we parted at the university twenty years ago.

We were both gray-haired old fellows now, but I had grown thin and sharp in the courts of Baltimore and Washington, while he had lived quietly on his plantation, growing more fat and jovial and genial with every year.

Beardsley possessed large means then. and maintained the unlimited hospitality usual among large Virginia planters before the war. The house was crowded during my stay with old friends from the valley and southern counties. His daughter, too, was not only a beauty, but a favorite among the young people, and brought many attractive, well bred girls about her, and young men who were not so attractive and well bred. Lack of occupation and a definite career had reduced the sons of too many Virginia families at that time to cards and horses as their sole pursuits; the war, while it left them penniless, was in one sense their salvation.

One evening, sitting on the verandah with Beardsley, smoking, and looking in the open windows of the parlor, I noticed a woman who sat apart, and who, as I fancied, was avoided by the younger girls. In a Virginia country party there are always two or three unmarried women, past their first youth, with merry blue eyes, brown hair, and delicate features-women "with a history," but who are none the less good dancers, riders, and able to put all their eleverness into the making of a pie or a match for their cousins. This woman was blue-eyed and brown haired but she had none of the neat, wide awake self possession of her class. She had a more childish expression, and spoke with a more timid uncertainty, than even Lottie Beardsley, who was still in the school room. I called my host's attention to her, and asked who

"It is the daughter of my cousin, General George Waring. You remember him, surely-of the Henrico branch of Warings ?"

"Certainly. But he had only one child-Louisa; and I remember receiving an invitation to her wedding years

"Yes. This is Louisa. The wedding never took place. It's an old story," he said, after a pause, "and the truth is, Floyd, I brought the girl here while you were with us in the hope that you, with your legal acumen, could solve the mystery that surrounds her. I'll give you the facts to-morrow-it's impossible to do it now. But tell me, in the mean time, how she impresses you, looking at her as a lawyer would at a client, or